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Defense aide confirms U.S. satellites jammed

By Walter Andrews
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The Soviet Union's jamming of American surveillance satellites used for monitoring Soviet missile tests — a "possible" violation of nuclear arms agreements — was confirmed publicly yesterday by a senior Defense Department official.

Richard Perle, assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, said in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the Soviets have been jamming the surveillance satellites used by the United States to monitor Soviet tests and to verify their compliance with the nuclear arms agreements.

Earlier this month, government sources told The Washington Times that the Soviets, apparently using technical information provided by convicted U.S. spies, had begun jamming the satellites, which are the primary means the U.S. has for verifying Soviet compliance.

Last week, Defense Department spokesman Michael Burch did not deny the story. But Mr. Burch also declined to provide positive confirmation or details because he said secret classified material was involved.

During the foreign affairs committee hearing yesterday, Mr. Perle was asked to what extent the Soviets are jamming U.S. satellites used to monitor Soviet missile tests.

"There has been activity of the kind that you suggest. It's very worrisome," the assistant secretary replied.

"There is a pattern, a growing pattern, unhappily, of the Soviets resorting to a variety of devices that have the effect of denying us information that is critical to judging their performance under existing obligations."

"And interfering with satellites in the manner you suggested is one of the devices they've been resorting to," Mr. Perle said.

Asked if the jamming constituted a violation of the existing arms control agreements, the assistant secretary replied "there is no doubt there is a pattern of behavior that is inconsistent with those agreements, and it is possible that the activity to which you refer is also a violation."

There are problems in determining whether violations have occurred because of "some difficulties in the way the existing agreements have been drafted," Mr. Perle commented.

He said the existing agreements do not prohibit interfering with satellites "provided they do not interfere with the collection of information relevant to provisions of the agreement."

Mr. Perle said it may be difficult to prove the satellite jamming is related to arms control provisions because the Soviets have been resorting to "concealment, camouflage, and the like" to obscure their activities.

He said these attempts at concealment and deception have been increasing dramatically, and are a source of concern.

Mr. Perle declined to elaborate on his remarks following the committee hearing.

In January, President Reagan charged the Soviets with seven arms control violations, including interfering with verification by the encoding or encrypting of missile test data being telemetered to ground stations.

Among other things, the telemetry provides data on the number of warheads tested on a particular type of missile. That data is used to set warhead limits in an agreement for particular missiles.

But the Soviets now have begun jamming the telemetry-monitoring satellites so as to prevent even the gathering of the encrypted data for possible decoding later, sources said.

Sources said earlier this month the jamming has been electronically precise, and has apparently used to advantage technical data reportedly provided to the Soviets by convicted spies Andrew Daulton Lee and Christopher John Boyce in 1977 on the Rhyolite and Argus sur-

veillance satellites.

The satellite jamming began last year after the Soviets shot down the Korean 007 airliner in September, the sources said.

U.S. intelligence also indicates the jamming is deliberate in that it has only occurred during missile flight tests, the sources said. They said they could not say why the Soviets waited until recently to utilize the Rhyolite satellite data provided by the spies.

Shortly after the KAL 007 disaster, the sources said the Soviets also began jamming three so-called "Cobra" radars used for monitoring the path taken by a Soviet missile and multiple warheads during flight tests.

The radars, using sophisticated phased-array, electronic scanning, operate out of the Aleutian islands, close to the Kamchatka peninsula where much of the Soviet monitoring of their warheads re-entering the atmosphere is done.

The KAL 007 was shot down after flying off course over Kamchatka.

The Cobra Dane is a phased-array radar based on one of the Aleutian islands. Cobra Judy is based on a ship and the Cobra Ball is an aircraft specially designed for monitoring Soviet missile tests.

The jamming of the radars was previously reported in February, although it has not been confirmed by the Pentagon. The sources said the jamming of the telemetry-monitoring satellites began sometime after the jamming of the radars.

One source said the intelligence community has reached a consensus that Soviet willingness to jam verification monitoring satellites, as indicated in the case of the Rhyolite spacecraft, has made the arms control process "unviable."

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